



## Senator Mike Young

200 W. Washington St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

News from the Indiana State Senate

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## News You Can Use

### Indiana's Do Not Call List

Indiana is one of 40 states that has the means to protect citizens against unwanted and unsolicited phone calls. The Indiana Telephone Privacy Program allows Hoosiers to put their home telephone numbers on a "do not call" list. This list is updated quarterly and distributed to telemarketing companies. These companies can face hefty fines if they are in violation of Indiana guidelines. Getting your name on this "do not call" list is surprisingly easy. To enroll, simply call the toll-free number (1-888-834-9969) or visit the Attorney General's website at [www.in.gov/attorneygeneral/telephone/](http://www.in.gov/attorneygeneral/telephone/).

Now that telemarketers are unable to reach you at home, they are looking for another outlet. Later this year, a wireless subscriber directory sponsored by the Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association, will be published. It is speculated that this directory will include about 75 percent of all mobile phone numbers and will be accessible by real estate agents, telemarketers and other on-the-go professionals.

The federal government also is addressing this issue with legislation that will prevent wireless-phone companies from automatically distributing cell numbers into this directory. To prevent your mobile phone number from being distributed, please add it to Indiana's "do not call" list.

### 2-1-1 Telephone Program

In the past few years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of agencies and help centers available to answer problems we citizens may encounter. Despite this abundance of information, it is difficult to know where to turn for specific questions. With the introduction of a new and free telephone service, help is now a short phone call away.

2-1-1 is a new service that provides immediate access to every certified social service agency and non-profit organization in the state of Indiana. 2-1-1 offers information on health insurance programs, support groups, home health care, after school programs, protective services, and volunteer opportunities.

Currently, 20 counties are using 2-1-1 and legislation has been authored to establish the program throughout Indiana. House Enrolled Act 1344 requests absolutely no state money, while creating an account for future funds. The Cinergy Foundation, funded by Cinergy shareholders, has pledged over \$600,000 to help fund this program over the next three years.

2-1-1 works in the same way that 9-1-1 operates for emergencies and 4-1-1 works for general information. The goal is to have this service available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. For more information, please visit the web at [www.in211.org](http://www.in211.org).

I serve the citizens  
of Senate District 35,  
which includes Johnson,  
Marion and Morgan  
Counties.

Stay connected  
to the Indiana General Assembly  
by visiting  
[www.in.gov/legislative](http://www.in.gov/legislative)

You can also visit  
my legislative web site at:

[www.in.gov/S35](http://www.in.gov/S35)

Send letters to:  
**Sen. Mike Young**  
**Indiana Senate**  
**200 W. Washington St.**  
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### Commission Studies Methods To Replace Property Tax

"We want a better system," and "Do no harm," were the sentiments echoed in the Property Tax Replacement Study Commission, which has met several times at the Statehouse. The property tax situation in Indiana is a frustration shared by many as the newly-formed committee, consisting of legislators, farmers, businessmen, and homeowners, develops methods to reduce local government's reliance on property taxes.

The reassessment process is complete in almost every county in Indiana, and agencies and organizations are collecting data that will aid the commission and the legislature in figuring ways to replace over \$5.5 billion in property taxes collected each year and to provide oversight of over 9,000 levies and 172 different types of funds for local government programs and services.

This monumental task is being conducted due to a law passed during the 2004 legisla-

tive session. The committee must study the effects of eliminating 50 percent, 75 percent, and 100 percent of net property tax levies.

One major hurdle for the commission is to identify revenue sources capable of replacing property taxes and providing sufficient revenue to maintain essential government services. The commission will submit status reports to the Legislative Council, which is the administrative body of the General Assembly, in September.

The commission broke down into small groups that will work on five major issues during the year: Property Tax Administration Issues; Local Government Services; Long Term Debt Issues; Other State Tax Systems; and Property Tax Levies and Controls.

The goal is to lessen local governments' dependence on property taxes and create a more equitable and fair method of funding local government.

### HoosierRx Program Discounts Prescription Drugs for Low-Income Senior Citizens

America leads the world in pushing the bounds of science to bring new prescription drugs to the market, resulting in lives saved and an increased quality of life. There are high costs involved in bringing these drugs to the open market. Part of that price tag is passed on to the consumer, which causes patients who do not have drug coverage to suffer financially. As a relief to those patients, some new programs have been established to help with the costs of prescription drugs.

The U.S. government has launched a new drug discount card that will provide immediate financial relief to seniors. This program, which took effect on June 1, allows recipients to choose a discount card program that best suits their needs. Medicare will be providing reliable and accessible information. Anyone who is enrolled in Medicare Part A or Part B

and not receiving Medicare benefits is eligible for the discount drug card program. For more information or to become enrolled, you may call **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227) or visit the Medicare website at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

HoosierRx is a state program that helps to shift the cost of prescription drugs away from low-income seniors. HoosierRx was enacted four years ago by the General Assembly and allows seniors who qualify to receive a 75 percent discount on the cost of medications. This program will be coordinated with the Medicare discount drug card to maximize savings. Low-income seniors can sign up for the HoosierRx Drug Card by calling, toll-free, **1-866-267-4679** or by visiting [www.in.gov/HoosierRx](http://www.in.gov/HoosierRx). Local pharmacies will also have applications.



## Consumer Information

### Unclaimed Property

The Attorney General reports thousands of unclaimed property listings all across the state of Indiana. Some possible sources of unclaimed property are: credit balances, old savings and checking accounts, unpaid wages, mutual fund shares, insurance proceeds, uncashed traveler's checks, and utility deposits.

You can contact the Indiana Attorney General's office to see if you or a relative has a claim.

Visit [www.indianaunclaimed.com](http://www.indianaunclaimed.com) or call, toll-free, **1-866-IN-CLAIM** (1-866-462-5246).

### Direct Mail Lists

Tired of receiving advertising through the mail? Remove your name from direct mail lists by visiting [www.dmaconsumers.org](http://www.dmaconsumers.org) or write to:

Mail Preference Service  
Attn: Dept 12851374  
Direct Marketing Association  
PO Box 282  
Carmel, NY 10512

### National No-Call List

Indiana led the way with the creation of a no-call registry. Federal legislators followed suit by creating a national do not call list. Consumers now can list both home and mobile phone numbers in order to prevent unsolicited telemarketing calls. To register your phone number on the national list, visit [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov). Additions to the list are updated every three months.

## Voting Record

Voting on legislation is one of the most important responsibilities of being a member of the Senate. I am proud to report to the citizens of our district that I achieved a 96 percent voting attendance record during the 2004 legislative session.

The 2004 legislative session ended March 4. During the session, 503 Senate bills and 459 House Bills were filed. Ten percent of those bills were sent to and signed by the governor.

## Indiana Leads the Way In Implementing No Child Left Behind



The biggest challenge many states are facing on education is how to implement the **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**(NCLB) that was signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2003. The act expanded the federal role in education and set in place requirements that reach into every public school in America.

Thanks to the leadership of the General Assembly, Indiana helped lead the nation in school reform with the passage of Public Law 221 in 1999. P.L. 221 is Indiana's school improvement and accountability law that put in motion many of the same requirements that NCLB requires. The law focuses on improving education for all schools and ensuring Hoosier students have the skills they need to succeed.

In recent months there has been criticism of potential flaws in NCLB. Congress and the Federal Department of Education are working to address these concerns, to allow more flexibility

for low performing schools, and to improve special education. The General Assembly is committed to making sure that Indiana continues to ensure that no child is left behind. For more information on this topic and other education related issues, please visit the Indiana Department of Education web site at [www.doe.state.in.us](http://www.doe.state.in.us).

### Both NCLB and P.L. 221 require the following of our schools and educators:

- High academic standards
- Assessment using tests aligned with the standards
- Accountability for achievement
- Focus on the needs of all children
- Highly qualified teachers
- School safety measures
- School report cards
- Comprehensive data system ([www.asap.state.in.us](http://www.asap.state.in.us))

## Senators Study Variety of Topics In Summer Committee Meetings

### Young serves on three panels during interim

This year, I have been appointed to serve as chair of the **Administrative Rules and Oversight Committee**. The committee has been charged with handling citizen complaints concerning agency rules or practices, violations of the time frames within which agencies must promulgate and adopts rules, and proposed agency rules that have an economic fiscal impact of \$500,000 or more.

I am also serving on the following panels:

### Pension Management Oversight Commission:

This commission is studying the benefits for public safety officers who develop cancer

or heart conditions that are related to their duties and child support withholding by public pension funds. It is also reviewing qualified domestic relations orders applicable to public pension funds.

### Interim Study Committee on Professional Licensing and Consumer Issues:

This committee is studying the minimum mandatory training standards for firefighters, certification of emergency management organizations and professional emergency managers, predatory gasoline pricing and mortgage lending policies.



## State Faces Tough Budget Decisions in 2005

### Indiana Personal Income Lags the Nation

On July 12, the state closed the books for Fiscal Year 2004. According to official figures released by the State Budget Agency, the state is expected to have a "surplus" or "reserve" of just \$300 million on June 30, 2005 – the close of the current budget cycle. As shown on **Figure 1** this means the state's reserve will have declined by nearly \$2 billion since 1998.

The problem is that state spending has been exceeding state revenues for the past several years. State revenue collections actually decreased in both Fiscal Years 2001 and 2002 before showing a 0.5 percent increase in 2003. Revenue collections increased by

about 2.7 percent for Fiscal Year 2004, the year that just ended.

In order to avoid big spending cuts in education and health care, the state has been using the surplus and employing spending delays and other temporary solutions. These measures make it possible for the state to spend nearly \$800 million more than it will collect this year. While there is nothing inherently wrong with these accounting measures – they have helped the state avoid big spending cuts in our schools - these measures are only one-time temporary fixes and cannot be sustained. So, while it may seem like Indiana's economy is improving,

the state's financial condition actually remains very weak.

A \$300 million reserve sounds like a lot of money. But with an annual \$11.2 billion General Fund Budget, including big items such as \$4.3 billion for K-12 education, \$2.1 billion for local property tax relief, \$1.4 billion for universities and \$1.2 billion for Medicaid, \$300 million really is not a sufficient reserve. In fact, the State Budget spends more than \$30 million per day every day of the year. A \$300 million reserve barely funds 10 days of expenses.

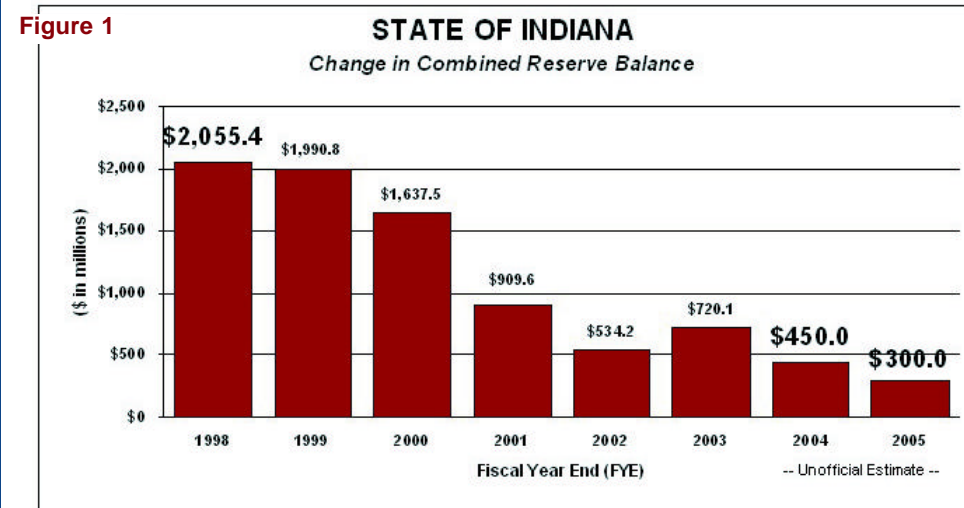
The root of Indiana's budget problems is slow revenue growth. Part of the problem is job loss due to the recession. But the real problem is that Indiana lags the nation in personal income growth. As reflected in **Figure 2**, the problem has steadily grown since 1996. Today, the average Hoosier worker earns only about 91 cents for every \$1.00 earned by the average worker nationwide. Just as Hoosier workers earn less, state tax revenues lag as well. If Indiana workers earned the same as the national average, the subsequent gain in tax revenues would erase the state's structural deficit. Indiana needs to improve its economy relative to the nation or Indiana's budget – and the ability to adequately fund priorities like education and health care - will remain a problem.

Beginning in January, the General Assembly will start work on the state budget for the next biennium. Much of the discussion will center on adequate funding for education and health care. But, it is equally important to continue to try to find ways to diversify the economy and stimulate business investment as the real long term solution to the state's budget dilemma.



**SNAPSHOT:** Senator Young was a speaker at the ribbon cutting ceremony for "The Dead Sea Scrolls to the Bible in America" exhibit at the Adam's Mark hotel near the Indianapolis airport.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

